



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Boat captain indicted in alien smuggling death

MIAMI- R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Jesus Torres, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Sheriff Ken Jenne, Broward County Sheriff's Office, Rear Admiral David W. Kunkel, United States Coast Guard, and Paul Blocker, Jr., United States Customs and Border Protection, announced today the filing of a criminal Indictment charging defendant, George Bridell Rolle, with one (1) count of alien smuggling for profit resulting in death and four (4) counts of alien smuggling for profit.

This Indictment is the most recent result of Operation Lost at Sea, a multi-agency task force effort initiated by the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) in conjunction with agents, detectives, and attorneys from the U.S. Attorney's Office, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office.

Operation Lost at Sea was created in response to the numerous human smuggling incidents that have occurred in South Florida during the past year. Since September 2005, approximately 25 landings of illegal immigrants have been identified in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, resulting in seven (7) deaths and the detention of more than 300 illegal immigrants. Operation Lost at Sea has yielded approximately twenty (20) Indictments and resulted in the arrests of five (5) boat captains, seventeen (17) aggravated felons, and the seizure of six (6) kilograms of cocaine, sixteen (16) vessels and \$5000 in cash.

In the instant case, defendant George Bridell Rolle, a Bahamian national, allegedly attempted to smuggle illegal migrants to South Florida from the Bahamas. Tragically, Rolle's boat capsized. On April 21, 2006, a "Good Samaritan" vessel spotted the migrants, picked them up, and advised the Coast Guard that they had come across five persons clinging to a capsized vessel about 25 miles off the coast of Ft. Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida.

The Coast Guard immediately launched a search and rescue operation and received five people from the Good Samaritan vessel. In the process of caring for the survivors, the Coast Guard determined that the five people were not U.S. citizens. All five persons were taken on the Coast Guard Cutter "Kodiak Island." The Good Samaritan vessel, on its way back to where it had come from, subsequently spotted a body floating in the water in the vicinity of the capsized boat and again notified the Coast Guard, who recovered the body. A passport found on the body identified the male as a Haitian national. The Broward Medical Examiner has since confirmed that this individual drowned. Further investigation has established that the group rescued by the Coast Guard consisted of persons from the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Haiti.

U. S. Attorney Acosta stated, "The traffic in human cargo has got to stop. Smugglers in human cargo break our laws, endanger migrants' lives and threaten our national security by bringing in persons, "no questions asked." Smugglers promise freedom and hope, but too often deliver misery and death."

"ICE is at the forefront of pursuing those who are engaged in human smuggling," said Jesus Torres, Special Agent in Charge of ICE in Miami. "We will continue working with our federal, state, and local partners in investigating,

combating and bringing to justice the ruthless smugglers who have no regard for human life and whose only goal to profit at the expense of others."

Broward County Sheriff Ken Jenne stated, "Every murder demands justice, and that justice shouldn't stop at the shoreline. Alien smugglers prey on the most desperate of people, and while dangling the promise of a better life, what they deliver is too often an inhumane trip across dangerous waters only to end in a tragic death. Today's indictment sends a clear message that all lives are valuable, and all crimes will see justice no matter where they occur."

"The loss of life in this case demonstrates yet again the often deadly and always dangerous nature of attempts to illegally enter the United States from the sea," said Rear Adm. David W. Kunkel, Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District. "This indictment marks the steadfast cooperation between the Coast Guard and our partners at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security."

"The U.S. Customs and Border Protection will continue to work collaboratively with other DHS and law enforcement partners to secure America's borders between the ports of entry," said Paul Blocker, Jr., Chief Patrol Agent for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. "Together, we will vigorously pursue, apprehend and prosecute human smugglers who have demonstrated a callous disregard for human life."

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Broward County Sheriff's Office, United States Coast Guard, and the United States Border Protection, as well as the other agencies involved in the Task Force. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Patricia L. Diaz and Special Assistant United States Attorney Marc Anton.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.